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Afghanistan Situation Report

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21 May 1985

State Dept. review completed

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Some insurgent groups have attempted to bolster their support among the local population by providing services, building schools, and organizing local governments.

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France has provided humanitarian aid and limited military support to the Afghan insurgents. While French interest in Afghanistan is high, budgetary constraints mean French aid will remain limited.

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This document is prepared weekly by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues raised in the publication should be directed to [REDACTED]

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PUBLICATION NOTE

Unless major developments warrant otherwise, we will not publish the **AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT** next week. The next report will appear on 4 June 1985.

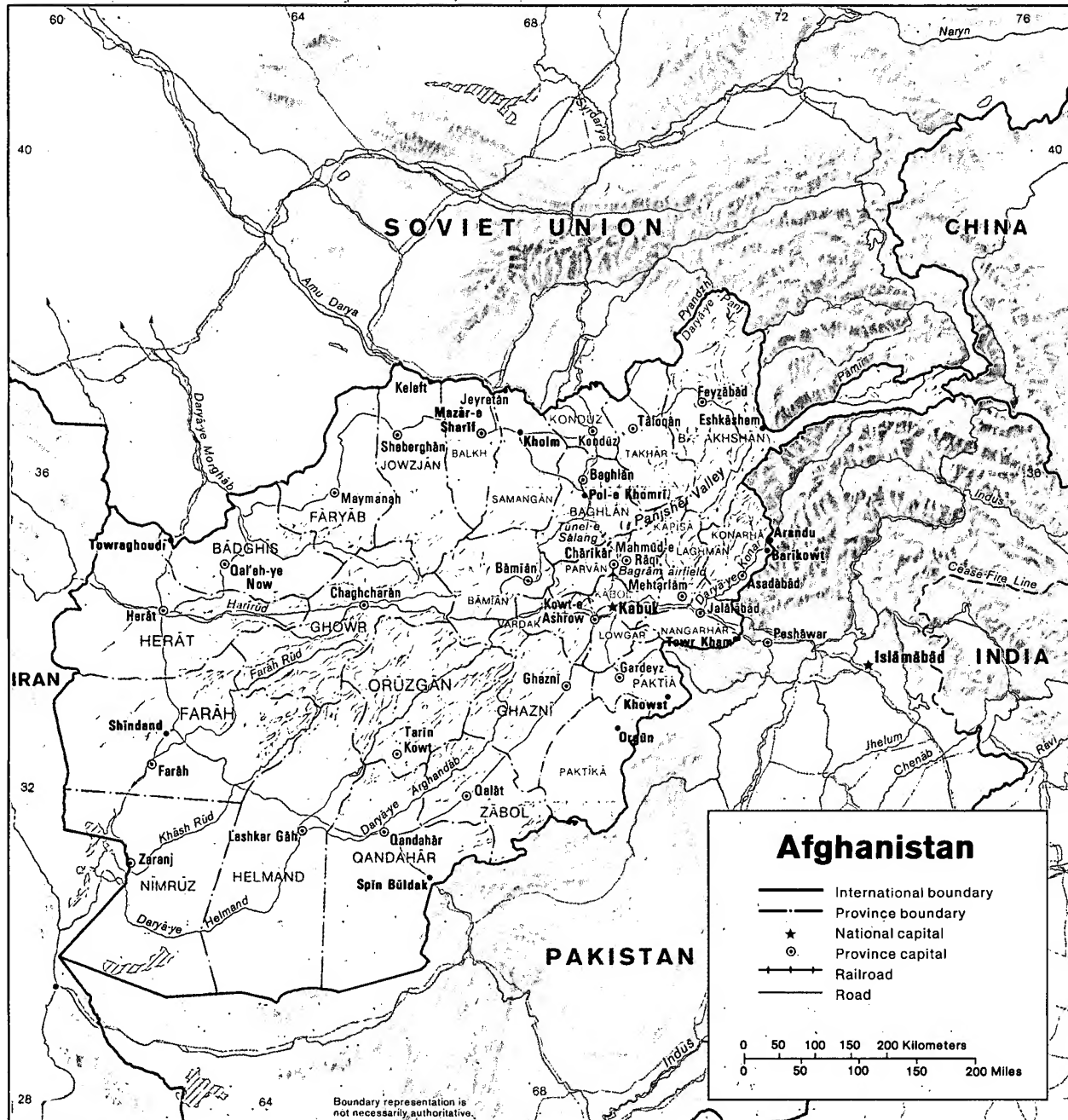
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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: RESISTANCE SUPPORT TO THE LOCAL POPULATION
by NESA

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Some insurgent groups in Afghanistan have attempted to retain and build support from the local population in their areas of operation by supporting food production and distribution system, operating schools, providing medical and other services, and even organizing local governments. Groups with ethnic or other established ties in their areas most often seek to provide such services.

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Food Production and Distribution

Local people provide most food for the insurgents. Some commanders, such as Panjsher Valley commander Masood, pay the locals for food supplies; others promise to pay. Some groups steal food from villagers, and some even destroy crops of farmers who do not support them.

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Some insurgent groups are trying to increase food production, mainly to ensure their own supply, but in the process are providing local farmers with security and services. Insurgents have assisted farmers--particularly in Wardak and Qandahar Provinces--by helping repair canals and planting and harvesting crops. Local commanders have also encouraged refugees in Pakistan to return and farm their land when the weather was favorable.

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Medical Care

Despite the increase in medically-trained insurgents, civilians receive little care from insurgent medical personnel. Care is primitive except when foreign doctors provide the services--and sometimes even then.

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Insurgents transport doctors, most of whom are French or other foreigners, and provide security and a place to practice. Foreign doctors in Afghanistan are most

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concerned with treating the civilian population, training Afghan nurses and first aid workers, and bringing serum to inoculate children against tuberculosis and measles. [REDACTED]

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The number of European doctors inside Afghanistan has declined in recent years, but insurgents are receiving increased medical training. Red Cross officials told US diplomats that 1,250 Afghans took a one-day first aid course, and 79 took a four-week paramedic course between October 1984 and February 1985; 20 Afghan paramedics recently completed a one-year course, [REDACTED]

Several Afghans learned surgical procedures from French doctors in the Panjsher Valley and treated insurgents and civilians after a Soviet offensive drove the doctors out of the valley. [REDACTED]

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Education

The insurgents have established schools, mostly for religious training:

- The Jamiat has about 30 schools that teach reading and religion and indoctrinate children in antiregime and pro-Jamiat propaganda near the city of Balkh.
- Herat Province insurgent councils, under the leadership of Jamiat commander Ismail Khan, run schools in their areas.

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Media

Insurgents have increased their use of media for propaganda and entertainment, but their efforts are still small. Three clandestine radios broadcast criticism of Soviet and Afghan regime policy, and the resistance also distributes cassette recordings. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] tapes distributed by Panjsher insurgents are popular, but scarce. One group of insurgents claims it publishes a newspaper in [REDACTED]

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Baghlan Province featuring general news, insurgent operations, and criticism of the Afghan regime. [REDACTED]

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Other Services

In some areas the insurgents have worked with the population to establish local governments. The Tajiks of the Panjsher Valley under Masood created a functioning local government by 1982, despite intense Soviet military pressure. Insurgents in Balkh Province established "commands" with responsibilities for education, health, and political affairs. They also helped resettle villagers forced from their homes by Soviet and regime military operations. Ismail Khan heads a Provincial Council that addresses financial, religious, agricultural, and medical issues in Herat Province. [REDACTED]

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Groups in several areas collect taxes to support the insurgency. Some taxes are levied quasi-officially by the insurgent governments; others are exacted as an insurgent group moves through an area. Villages sometimes complain they are taxed by more than one insurgent group. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami and Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin faction) were taxing families with sons who worked abroad. [REDACTED]

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PERSPECTIVE

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FRANCE-AFGHANISTAN: FRANCE AND THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE
by [] NESA and [] EURA

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France has provided humanitarian aid and--since 1984--
limited military support to the Afghan insurgents.
French support for the resistance grows out of strong
anti-Soviet feelings within President Mitterrand's
ruling Socialist Party, public opposition to Soviet
aggression. [] We
believe that French military and economic aid to the
insurgency is likely to remain modest because of
budgetary constraints. []

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Military Aid for the Insurgency

Paris has given limited amounts of technical assistance
and military training to several insurgent groups,

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Humanitarian Aid

Paris has contributed to several private
organizations--including the well-known Medecins Sans
Frontieres group--that send European medical and relief
personnel inside Afghanistan to aid insurgents and

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civilians. These organizations, run for the most part by French civilians, have sent more than 200 young Europeans, many of whom are French, into Afghanistan. Fifteen Europeans are currently inside the country,

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[redacted] these volunteers provide the best medical care available to rural Afghans; they often perform major surgery, establish inoculation programs, treat lesser illnesses, and train Afghan paramedics. [redacted]

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Beyond its medical efforts, France has also funded Afghan refugee programs. Paris has donated about 15,000 tons of wheat and has encouraged the Common Market to increase its shipments of butter and oil during the last several years, according to the US Embassy in Paris. [redacted]

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France's Socialist Party has also lent support to efforts to publicize the cause of the Afghan insurgents. [redacted]

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PS officials are organizing a conference of European Socialist Parties for late-June, tentatively entitled "The European Left and Afghanistan." This effort is almost certainly an attempt to compensate for the PS's failure to persuade the Socialist International to issue a statement in 1984 supporting the Afghan resistance. [redacted]

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Behind the French Support

The government's support for the Afghan resistance stems largely from President Mitterrand's generally anti-Soviet views and strong opposition within his Socialist Party to Soviet adventurism. Mitterrand believes the expansion of Soviet influence is the gravest threat to the development of the Third World and to international stability, [redacted]

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[redacted] he views the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as a particularly brutal manifestation of Soviet expansionism. Mitterrand's own participation in the French Resistance during World War II, we believe, may also contribute to a personal affinity with the Afghan cause. [redacted]

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Longstanding French scholarly interest in Afghanistan has also spurred French support for the insurgents, most importantly by arousing opposition to Soviet

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actions within influential intellectual circles. A number of well-known French intellectuals--especially the anthropologist Oliver Roy--are outspoken backers of the resistance and travel frequently to Afghanistan to report on the state of the insurgency. There are also a large number of French journals covering Afghanistan--Les Nouvelles Afghanistan is the most prominent--and the insurgency receives an in-depth and almost universally sympathetic coverage in most major French dailies.

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Outlook

Although French diplomatic support for the resistance will remain strong, Mitterrand is unlikely to increase aid to the Afghans significantly. Domestic economic constraints have forced sharp reductions in foreign military assistance and have strained the French military budget,

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Most French officials probably believe that France must concentrate its limited financial and military resources on higher priorities in Africa and the Middle East during this period of economic austerity. Most importantly, French aid is constrained by the paucity of direct French interest in Afghan affairs; lacking commercial or longstanding cultural ties--such as exist in Africa, for example--a more active French role in support of the Afghans is unlikely. The influence of those who would support increased aid to the insurgents is, moreover, probably counter-balanced by the views of long-time Mitterrand confidant and new Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas.

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[REDACTED]

Dumas believes that Afghanistan is not a major problem for the Soviets and that, in any event, France can do little to help the resistance succeed against Moscow's superior strength, [REDACTED]

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Paris also probably assumes the US will play the major role in assistance programs and can be counted on to take up any slack. French officials decided recently not to mount a major food aid program in 1985, for example, because they believe US assistance will meet current needs, according to the US Embassy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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The French right, which stands a good chance of winning control of the National Assembly in 1986 and the presidency in 1988, is unlikely to boost French aid substantially. Although some conservatives would almost certainly favor a larger role and some, such as Centrist leader Francois Leotard, have taken a strong personal interest in the insurgency, the right will probably be restrained by the same fiscal considerations as the Socialists. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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